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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN (GEHRENBECK), EUR/ACE AND PRM/ENSA
USAID FOR OFDA - ROB ANDREW AND ALEX MAHONEY
ASTANA PLEASE PASS TO ALMATY USAID OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID KG

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YOVANOVICH DECLARES DISASTER IN OSH
OBLAST, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

¶1. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: AMBASSADOR MARIE YOVANOVICH
DECLARES A HUMANITARIAN DISASTER IN THE OSH OBLAST LOCATED IN
SOUTHERN KYRGYZ REPUBLIC FOLLOWING AN EARTHQUAKE ON DECEMBER
26, 2007, AND THREE ADDITIONAL EARTHQUAKES ON JANUARY 1,
¶2. 2008. THE AMBASSADOR AND THE REGIONAL MISSION REQUEST THAT
DCHA/OFDA IMMEDIATELY COMMIT USD 50,000 TO PURCHASE BUILDING
SUPPLIES AND LABOR TO REPAIR SELECTED SCHOOLS THAT WERE MADE
UNSAFE IN THE AFFECTED AREA. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

¶3. BACKGROUND: ON DECEMBER 26, 2007 AN EARTHQUAKE MEASURING
6.0 OCCURRED IN THE SOUTH OF KYRGYZSTAN, IN A REMOTE AREA
SOME 30 KILOMETRES FROM THE CITY OF OSH, CAUSING DAMAGE TO
HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE. ON JANUARY 1, 2008 THREE
SEPARATE EARTHQUAKES, OF WHICH THE LARGEST ONE WITH A
MAGNITUDE OF 5.6 OCCURRED IN THE SAME REGION CAUSING FURTHER
DAMAGE. THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES, HOWEVER DUE TO THE POOR
QUALITY OF HOUSES AND OTHER BUILDINGS, MOST OF WHICH ARE
DECades OLD, THOUSANDS ARE LEFT WITHOUT PROPER SHELTER.

¶4. DURING A COORDINATION MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY, 2008,
THE MINISTRY OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS INFORMED REPRESENTATIVES
OF INTERNATIONAL DONORS AND EMBASSIES THAT ASSESSMENTS IN THE
AREA FOUND A TOTAL OF 968 DISPLACED FAMILIES (APPROX. 5,300
PEOPLE) THAT ARE IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. THEY
EXPLAINED THAT ASSESSMENTS ARE STILL ONGOING, SPECIFICALLY IN
SETTLEMENTS AT HIGHER ALTITUDE, AND THIS NUMBER WILL
INCREASE. COMPOUNDING THE PROBLEM IS UNSEASONABLY COLD
WEATHER WITH PROLONGED SUB-FREEZING TEMPERATURES AND SNOW
STORMS WHICH ARE HAMPERING RELIEF EFFORTS AND ADDING TO THE
SUFFERING OF DISPLACED FAMILIES. THE MINISTRY CONFIRMED THE
FOLLOWING AS OF 8 JANUARY BASED ON THE ASSESSMENT OF 8561
BUILDINGS: 1) 5357 HOUSES DAMAGED, 990 HEAVILY DAMAGED, AND
4363 HOUSES IN NEED OF REPAIR; 2) 1 MEDICAL CLINIC WAS
SEVERELY DAMAGED; 3) 1 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IS COMPLETELY
DESTROYED, 7 SCHOOLS ARE CONSIDERED UNSAFE, AND 15 SECONDARY
SCHOOLS, 1 PRIMARY SCHOOL AND 3 KINDERGARTENS REQUIRE MINOR
REPAIRS.

¶5. THE GOVERNMENT OF KYRGYZSTAN AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION RESPONSE TO DATE: LED BY THE MINISTRY OF
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, RELIEF EFFORTS WERE IMMEDIATELY
INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT, UNITED NATION AGENCIES,
INTERNATIONAL NGOS, AND FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING THE
U.S. EMBASSY (WHICH PROVIDED AN INADEQUATE RESPONSE OF A FEW
BALES OF USED CLOTHING). THE RESPONSE BY OTHER DONORS
INCLUDED THE PROVISION OF WINTERIZED TENTS, MONEY, MEDICAL
ITEMS, WINTER CLOTHING, FUEL, PORTABLE HEATERS, AND BEDDING
MATERIALS.

¶6. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH KYRGYZ OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRY OF
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, BOTH AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN BISHKEK
AS WELL AS IN THE AFFECTED AREAS, THEY HAVE EXPRESSED THE
NEED TO HAVE EMERGENCY REPAIRS DONE IN SCHOOLS THAT WERE MADE

UNSAFE DUE TO THE EARTHQUAKES. THE WORST CASES OF THESE SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN CLOSED INDEFINITELY UNTIL REPAIRS CAN BE MADE. THE MISSION PROPOSES TO WORK WITH U.S.-BASED NGO, MERCY CORP TO PROCURE THE BUILDING MATERIALS AND HAVE THE REPAIR WORK DONE THROUGH A LOCAL CONTRACTOR. MERCY CORP IS IMPLEMENTING A USAID PROGRAM IN THE OSH AREA AND HAS THE STAFF AND EXPERIENCE IN WORKING WITH LOCAL CONTRACTORS AND CAN GET THE REPAIRS DONE QUICKLY.

16. MISSION WILL KEEP ADDRESSEES UPDATED AS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.

YOVANOVITCH